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8 January 1986

MEMORANDUM TO: C/NIC  
All NIOs  
AG Members

FROM: Graham E. Fuller, VC/NIC  
Hal Ford, VC/NIC

SUBJECT: Inauguration of NIC Discussion Groups

1. As we discussed at our recent staff meeting, we would like to greatly increase the contacts among NIOs and to profit from a cross-fertilization of ideas more than we do now. There are a number of broader issues currently falling a bit between stools and a number of inter-regional or inter-disciplinary issues which could be far more illuminated by joint approach.

2. We would like to initiate a series of one-time sessions, each of which will focus on a specific pre-arranged topic in which specific NIOs will be asked to participate. All interested NIOs and AG members will be welcome to attend, but the participation of those NIOs with specific responsibilities and expertise will be essential to the success of the session. Each session will run about 45 minutes--absolutely no longer than one hour.

3. The first session will be devoted to a discussion of economic reform in China and the USSR: why are the Chinese able to do what the Soviets are not able to do? This topic has broad implications not only for China and the USSR, but for many countries with radical socialist economic systems. The following questions particularly should be looked at:

- What are the differences between the Soviet and Chinese approaches to reform?
- Why is it that China can go further than the Soviet Union?
- What crunch points are likely to be encountered in Chinese reforms? Are they the same as potential Soviet crunch points?
- Can Chinese reforms teach the USSR anything?

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- Are Chinese reforms inherently a threat to the USSR?
- What relevance does the Chinese experience hold for other Communist and radical socialist countries?
- What is the relationship between economic and political reform?

4. I believe this topic should be of broad interest to a number of NIOs. Anyone is welcome, but we especially request the following NIOs and/or the assistants to take part: USSR, EUR, EA, and ECON--and those AG officers who work these problems. Anyone with questions or ideas should contact Graham Fuller.

5. Time: 1430, 23 January 1986.  
Place: Hal's office.

  
Graham E. Fuller

  
Hal Ford

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